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AUTHOR Igbineweka, Andrew O.; Princes, Carolyn D. W.
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ABSTRACT

This study considers the impact of curriculum decisions on African American achievement by exploring faculty and administrator views and attitudes toward curriculum decisions at public and private institutions of higher education. A random sampling of 291 faculty and administrators at two U.S. institutions, one public and one private, was asked to respond on a Likert scale to a questionnaire designed to measure the amount of perceived control that nine groups--academic administrators, faculty, regents and trustees, students, alumni, taxpayers, general public, coordinating boards, and accrediting groups--had on curriculum decisions. Analysis of the data corroborate differences in attitudes and approaches toward curriculum decisions by faculty and administrators at public and private institutions of higher education, although generally faculty is seen as having the greatest influence. The study then asks what implications this has on African American achievement, and concludes that in order to achieve significant progress in African American development and achievement, faculty must be able to infuse the curriculum with African American content. Tables in the body of the report summarize subject profiles and return-rate data by key group and by institution type, and rank order mean responses to the questionnaire. Appendixes include the questionnaire, and nine tables of comparative analyses. (Contains approximately 85 references.) (CH)

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A Study of Administrator and Faculty Views of Curriculum Decisions in a Public and a Private University: Implications for African American Achievement

by

Andrew O. Igbineweka, Ph. D.
Research Consultant and Professor of
Political Science and Public Administration
P. O. Box 19060
Oakland Station
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213-5060

and

Carolyn D. W. Princes, Ed.D.
Director of The African American Cultural Center
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Indiana, Pennsylvania 15705-1087

March 1, 1996

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Andrew O. Igbineweka

Carolyn D.W. Princes

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Abstract

Very few scholars have considered the impact of curriculum decisions on African American achievement. A recent study of administrator and faculty views of curriculum decisions in a public and a private university were reviewed for such implications. The study, its findings, and the proposed implications are outlined. This information generates further thought and research on another possible hinderance to African Americans' progress as well as provide direction for a possible action plan.

A Study of Administrator and Faculty Views of Curriculum Decisions in a Public and a Private University: Implications for African American Achievement

Education is often considered a means to upward mobility and "a good life." The school curriculum plays a major role in achieving this objective. Lying at the apex of most educational systems (Luce, 1986), Gaff explained that "the curriculum affects all [students]" (1992, p. 31). One can therefore reasonably assume that the school curriculum is particularly instrumental to the overall quality of education students receive. Moreover, regardless of ones' racial, socioeconomic, gender, religious, or physically challenged background, the school curriculum can be regarded as one of the greatest denominators to students' academic success, personal goals, and life achievement. Higher education curriculum, however, may be more germane than any other school curriculum to achieving desired educational outcomes as well as to African Americans or others' ultimate progress.

First, school management responsibilities are being divulged more and more to the school level, and there is a growing involvement of teachers in curriculum decisions (Chenoweth, 1996). The place where these teachers usually receive their professional training and preparation is through higher education institutions. Consequently, it can be said that higher education is among the first places where teachers obtain information on which to base curriculum decisions, and to a great extent, the initial point where rules and attitudes about what will be taught begin.

Second, educational reform is being linked more and more to higher education (Chenoweth, 1996). For example, Maryland has

adopted a program which provides teachers with practical opportunities to develop their professional skills as they simultaneously assess students' proficiency level in the basic skills (e.g., mathematics, writing, reading, etc.). Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, the program aims to eliminate any remediation needs of Maryland's college entrants by the year "2004" (Ibid., p. 12). According to Chenoweth, New York has implemented a very similar program.

Although operationally different, both programs are conceptually bent on "first deciding what every child should learn" (p. 17). This approach, indicated Chenoweth, is basically a revolutionary tactic in America's educational system that gives subject-matter teachers "unprecedented" power to change educational curriculum and school matters that "far exceeds questions of school choice, methods, and management" (Ibid.). The overall effect of such projects is yet to be determined. However, they provide an excellent example of how higher education has set the stage for what citizens are taught, beginning at a most crucial period in their life: the pre-college years. Collectively, they also demonstrate how colleges and universities are in a unique position to direct the course of human behavior. Several researchers appear to support the latter. For example, Hilliard et al. (1995) argue that:

> Universities and public school are at the center of the social construction of reality. What people come to regard as real and as legitimate is greatly influenced by

> scholars and teachers. The mind of the nation is bound to the mind of universities and schools...Suffice it to say, universities have some awesome power. For "power"... "is the ability to define reality and to get others to respond to that definition as if it were their own" (p. xviii.).

As suggestive thus far, higher education's power rests largely with its curriculum. In fact, it can be easily argued that higher education's curriculum is the primary source by which colleges and universities achieve their expected goal of "changing students in ways that will help them to become productive, thoughtful citizens who can succeed in a rapidly changing world" (Halpern et al., 1994, p. xv). This being the case, the logical conclusion is that adequate curriculum decisions are key resolves to ideal instructional designs, educational outcomes, human achievement, and African Americans' progress.

Similarly, knowing who controls the curriculum and their respective views on curriculum decision making are essential to achieving adequate curriculum decisions. That is, if adequate curriculum changes are to occur, higher education curriculum decision makers must be more appropriately identified and convinced of the need for change. When these two factors are satisfactorily defined, we can be better assured of having curriculum decisions made with the best interests of all students in mind.

Faculty and administrators are key control agents in higher education. Knowing how they feel about who controls or has the greatest influence on curriculum decisions may help with

discovering who the curriculum decision makers are. In turn, this knowledge may shed further insight into developing curriculum that helps to further promote the educational status, achievement, and progress of groups as African Americans. Research continues to show that they still appear near, or at the bottom of the socioeconomic and educational ladder. Therefore, exploring any area that has the potential to lead to their improvement must be keenly investigated.

In a study of faculty and administrators views of curriculum decisions in a public and a private university, the authors found that faculty followed by administrators were still seen as having the greatest influence on curriculum decisions. Although the study contained several limitations, the findings seem to have implications for African American achievements. The purpose of this paper is to familiarize the reader with the study and to outline those implications. It is hoped that this information will promote awareness, dialogue, and thought on the issue of curriculum decisions and its possible affect on African American achievement. This would serve as encouragement for further research in this area.

Literature Review

The progress of African Americans is affected by many variables. One factor undoubtedly involves who controls and makes curriculum decisions, but inadequate attention has been given to this area of curriculum development, and very few investigations, if any, have examined for the influence it may have on African

Americans' overall progress.

On the one hand, there is an abundance of research on the general status of higher education. On the other hand, usually, the educational progress and performance of African Americans are merely defined within this status. For example, researchers like Diamond (1989) have noted that the undergraduate college is at the heart of higher learning. At the same time, Diamond indicates that "the undergraduate college is a "troubled institution" (p. 1). If this is so for majority students, one can also assume that it is even more so for minority and African American students. Various other scholars appear to agree (e.g., Sedlacek, 1987; Giroux, 1988; Princes, 1992; Stage & Manning, 1992)

Young (1990) reports on research that more closely underpins the role of the college curriculum in African American affairs. He states that a study of student recruitment and retention problems at 196 "white" schools found that "the underlying causes of black student attrition was the poor quality of campus life" (p. 17). In the broadest sense, the curriculum is part of campus life. Assuming this to be true, then one of the most plausible conclusions is that, centered around the problem of minority and African American students in higher education is the college curriculum.

Indeed, "curriculum issues for the public schools and for the universities that prepare teachers for those schools strike at the very heart of what the nation is all about" (Hilliard et al., p. xvii). In higher education, the curriculum not only "touches the

interests of virtually all departments and faculty members on campus" (Gaff, p. 31), but extends far beyond the institutions themselves. Additionally, curriculum decision-making is unquestionably a major unit of curriculum development. While both are instrumental to students' overall success, the former leads to the latter. Therefore, it is worthwhile to explore the impact on African American achievement. First one needs to consider what the literature has to say about curriculum decision-making, particularly in higher education.

As previously suggested, studies on curriculum decisions are limited, and the few ones available indicate that curriculum decision-making is a time-consuming and complex process. To this end, Conrad and Pratt (1983) substantiate that the process of making curriculum decisions has been basically multidirectional, static, varying from institution to institution, and from time to time. Moreover, higher education curriculum is further complicated because it is generally autonomous, departmentalized, and politicalized. Consequently, concerns over curriculum decisions (e.g., selecting course content, specifying instructional objectives, evaluating instruction) have been a long source of controversy and misunderstanding among faculty and administrators, and primarily because of a long-standing power struggle between the two (Dressel, 1963; Huch, Cormier & Bounds, Jr., 1974; Berquist, 1977; Baldridge et al., 1978;). Nonetheless, recent studies indicate that these sensitive and vital areas of curriculum decision-making have not been adequately treated.

In fact, the literature suggests that not much has changed or resolved since the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) along with the American Council on Education (ACE) and the Association of Governing Boards of Colleges and Universities (AGB) issued a joint statement in 1966 which endorsed the joint participation of faculty, administrators, and governing boards in university governance (AAUP, ACE, & AGB, 1966; Perkins, 1973; AAUP Policy Documents and Reports, 1977; Millet, 1978; AAUP Draft Statement, 1981; NEA, 1993). While the joint statement recognized the governance of university as being traditionally, the joint responsibility of its various constituencies, it also indicated that faculty should have primary control over the fundamental areas of educational content and curricular design. Yet, very little research has explored whether faculty and administrators still believe this to be true; or for differences in faculty and administrators' perceptions of curriculum decisions in public and private universities.

Dressel (1971), Rudolph (1977), and various others have developed theoretical frameworks to study curriculum decisions. Although their work is strong, their approaches vary according to the emphasis placed on certain curricular "dimensions and interactions" (Conrad & Pratt, 1983, p. 16). Additionally, their work is subject to several other weaknesses. For example, Dressel's College and University Curriculum outlined six continua for the development of curricular programs. It can and has been criticized for being too confusing to curriculum planners (Ibid).

A study of curriculum decision-making would identify and describe how curriculum decisions are made in any institution; that is, who is involved from what stage to another.

Rudolph's major historical work and a host of others indicate that since the inception of the American College, the presidents of college and universities made curriculum decisions. Eventually, Boards of Control, faculty, students, the general public and others began participating in curricular decision-making. However, the issue of who has held the major responsibility for curriculum decisions has not been adequately treated.

In their model of curriculum decision-making, Conrad and Pratt (1983) observed three interactive phases: the Management Phase which refers to the role of presidents, lay boards, faculty, senior academic administrators, state and/or federal government, and students; the Committee Phase which refers to faculty, administrator and student involvement; and the Interest Group Phase which concerns climate and group values (faculty groups, student groups, budget groups, administrative groups, etc.). While this model is insightful, it must be criticized for reflecting on "transactional possibilities or considerations rather than discrete occurrences in every decision-making process" (Ibid.).

Other studies on curriculum governance such as those of Dressel and Pratt (1971), Lorion (1972), Falone (1974), O'Toole (1975), Conrad (1978), and Levine (1978), concentrated, more-or-less, on the identification of non-traditional curriculum structures without regard to the type of institution. These

frameworks are also vulnerable to similarly criticisms noted above.

Conrad and Pratt's more recent work, "From Metaphor to Model" defined a historically-based paradigm for curriculum decision-making. Neither it nor the related discussions offered prescriptive guidelines for making curriculum decisions (p. 29), let alone the attitudes of administrators and faculty toward curriculum decisions in public and private institutions.

Public and private institutions are two major types of higher education institutions in the United States. Generally, they are thought to be quite different in their approaches to curriculum decisions. For one thing, public institutions seem to have more governmental involvement than do private institutions. On the other hand, private institutions are seen as having fewer restrictions on curriculum decisions. In both instances though, faculty and administrators are considered key control agents, but their attitudes toward curriculum decisions in their respective types of institutions are not well known. Therefore, the aforementioned study can be regarded as an initial attempt to discover if perceptual differences exist between the two perceived key control agents regarding curriculum decisions in a public and a private institution. We now turn to the study.

The Study

The study was basically an exploratory investigation for faculty and administrator views and attitudes toward curriculum decisions at a public and a private institution. The primary purpose was to determine who controls or makes curriculum decisions

at the institutions and to compare their attitudes toward curriculum decisions at the respective institutions. It was hypothesized that no significant difference of opinions exists between the faculty and administrators within and between the institutions regarding the present (actual) and ideal (optimal) conditions of curriculum decisions. "Actual conditions" referred to present or current processes of curriculum decisions. "Optimal conditions" referred to the ideal or desired goals of curriculum decisions.

The Sample

Using a random table of numbers, a sample of 291 faculty and administrators from Southern Methodist University (SMU) and the University of North Texas (UNT) was randomly selected to participate in the study. SMU is a private, predominantly white, comprehensive university established in 1910. It is located in Dallas, Texas, enrolls approximately 9,100 students, and offers 58 baccalaureate degrees, 64 master degrees, and 18 doctoral degrees through six schools and colleges. SMU's professional staff totals approximately 40 academic administrators and 439 full-time faculty.

UNT is a public, predominantly white, comprehensive university that was established in 1890 as a Normal College. Located in Denton, Texas, which is approximately thirty miles from Dallas-Forth Worth metroplex, UNT enrolls nearly 26,000 students and offers 81 baccalaureate degrees, 123 master degrees, and 55 doctoral degrees through eight schools and colleges. Its professional staff totals approximately 64 academic administrators

and 711 full-time faculty members who come from every state in the Union. These two institutions were chosen basically because of institutional affiliation by one of the authors.

As seen in Tables IA and IB respectively, 62 of the subjects were academic administrators - departmental chairpersons, coordinators of graduate affairs, deans of schools and colleges, vice presidents, provost, deputy provost, and presidents; and 229 were full-time teaching faculty - instructors, assistant professors, associate professors, and full professors. Nearly 62 percent were from the public university (142 faculty; 38 administrators) and 38 percent were from the private university (87 faculty; 24 administrators). Administrators who spent less than 50 percent of their time on academic administrative duties and who held academic appointments were excluded from the study to avoid the traditional faculty/administrator dilemma. Faculty, however, represented the larger of the two groups sampled.

The Survey Instrument

A questionnaire (see Appendix A) was developed, validated, pre-tested, and implored to ascertain the subjects' perceptions and preferences of the control they felt each of nine actors (i.e., academic administrators, faculty, boards of control [regents and trustees], students, alumni, taxpayers-contributors, general public, coordinating boards, and accrediting groups) had on curriculum decisions (e.g., selecting the content of courses, specifying instructional objectives, and evaluating instruction). In it, the subjects were asked to respond to two questions in

TABLE IA: PROFILE OF SUBJECTS BY KEY GROUPS

KEY GROUPS	INSTITUTIONAL TYPE	NUMBER OF SUBJECTS	PERCENT OF TOTAL SUBJECTS	PERCENT WITHIN TYPE
ADMNR	PUBLIC	38	13.1	61.3
	PRIVATE	24	8.2	38.7
	TOTAL	62	**21.3**	100.0
FACULTY	PUBLIC	142	48.8	62.0
	PRIVATE	87	29.9	38.0
	TOTAL	**229**	**78.7**	100.0
	GRAND TOTAL	291	100.0	NA

TABLE IB: PROFILE OF SUBJECTS BY INSTITUTIONAL TYPE

INSTITUTIONAL TYPE	KEY GROUPS	NUMBER OF SUBJECTS	PERCENT OF TOTAL SUBJECTS	PERCENT WITHIN TYPE
PUBLIC (UNT)	ADMNR	38	13.1	21.1
	FACULTY	142	48.8	78.9
	TOTAL	**180**	**61.9**	**100.0**
PRIVATE (SMU)	ADMNR	24	8.2	21.6
	FACULTY	87	29.9	78.4
	TOTAL	**111**	**38.1**	**100.0**
	GRAND TOTAL	291	100.0	NA

relations to a Likert scale with corresponding weights of 5 for complete control, 4 for primary control, 3 for some control, 2 for almost no control, and 1 for no control. The questions were as follows: (1) How much control do you perceive each actor to presently have (Actual Conditions) in determining curriculum

governing policies in areas of general curriculum decisions? and (2) How much control should each actor have (Optimal Condition) in determining curriculum governing policies in areas of general curriculum decisions?

Tables IIA and IIB show the questionnaire return rates. As indicated, the overall response rate was approximately 61 percent (176 of 291): 40 from administrators (65% of 62) and 136 from faculty members (59.4% of 229). Of these, approximately 62 and 38 percent respectively, were from the public and the private institution. While the return rates differed between and within the institutions, the overall returns (in descending order) were public institution faculty, private institution faculty, public institution administrators, and private institution administrators.

Analysis

The respondents' mean responses to the research questions in relation to the nine curriculum actors were obtained and analyzed from an institutional and across key group perspective to determine the respondents' perceptions and attitudes toward the actual and optimal degree of control they felt were exerted by the actors on curriculum decisions. Additionally, the data were examined for the respondents' opinion of actual and optimal degree of control they believed was exerted by the various curriculum actors. It was then subjected to the independent and correlated t-test, statistical techniques (Huch et al, 1974, p. 22). The mean responses of the actual and optimal data were then ranked-ordered and analyzed for comparative purposes.

TABLE IIA: THE SUBJECTS' RETURN RATES BY KEY GROUP

KEY GROUPS	INSTIT. TYPE	NO. OF SUBJ.	NO. OF RET.	% OF TOTAL SUBJ.	% OF TOTAL RET.	% RET. OF TOT. SUBJ. BY GRP	% OF TOT. RET. BY GRP	% RET WITHIN GRP BY TYPE
ADMNR	PUBLIC	38	25	8.6	14.2	40.3	62.5	65.8
	PRIVATE	24	15	5.1	8.5	24.2	37.5	62.5
	TOTAL	62	40	13.7	22.7	**64.5**	100.0	64.5
FACULTY	PUBLIC	142	84	28.9	47.7	36.7	61.8	59.2
	PRIVATE	87	52	17.9	29.6	22.7	38.2	59.8
	TOTAL	229	136	46.8	77.3	**59.4**	100.0	59.4
GRAND TOTAL		291	176	**60.5**	100.0	NA	NA	NA

TABLE IIB: THE SUBJECTS RETURN RATES BY INSTITUTIONAL TYPE

INSTIT. TYPE	KEY GROUP	NO. OF SUBJ.	NO. OF RETURNS	% OF TOTAL SUBJ	% OF TOTAL RET.	% RET. OF TOT SUBJ BY TYPE	% RET BY TYPE	% RET. WITHIN TYPE BY GRP
PUBLIC	ADMNR	38	25	8.6	14.2	13.9	22.9	65.8
	FACULTY	142	84	28.9	47.7	46.7	77.1	59.2
	TOTAL	180	109	37.5	61.9	60.6	100.0	60.6
PRIVATE	ADMNR	24	15	5.1	8.5	13.5	37.3	62.5
	FACULTY	87	52	17.9	29.6	46.9	77.6	59.8
	TOTAL	111	67	23.0	38.1	60.4	100.0	60.4
GRAND TOTAL		291	176	**60.5**	100.0	NA	NA	NA

Findings

As previously mentioned, the responses were further analyzed

(and simplified) using rank order by means. This data highlighted the major findings of the study and are shown in Table III. As can be seen, it indicated that the faculty and administrator respondents in the private and the public institution believed that faculty had the greatest influence on curriculum decisions in their respective institutions. This was followed by the administrators (as curriculum actors). Additionally, the faculty and administrator respondents seemed to think alike: they feel that these curriculum actors should exert as much control over curriculum decisions in their respective institutions. In descending order, students, boards of control, accrediting groups, and the general public were in the next order of ranking perceived by the respondents as having the greatest influence on curriculum decisions. In terms of more specifics, however, the respondents' mean responses and the statistical analysis (see Appendix B, Tables IV through IX) indicated the following:

1. The faculty at both institutions seemed to believe that they control curriculum decisions, and as indicated by the optimal data, want to retain this control.

2. In both the public and the private institutions, the administrators appeared to think alike. They seemed to believe that there is too much curriculum control by faculty and that certain functions (e.g., sequencing courses and evaluating instruction) should be shared with administrators.

3. The faculty seemed to believe more than the administrators in the private sector that they (faculty) have more control over curriculum decisions.

4. More disagreement appeared among the public institution faculty than among the private institution faculty over the role of curriculum decision-makers should play in curriculum decisions. This indicated that the public institution faculty did not believe all the various actors (e.g., administrators, boards of control, alumni, general public, and coordinating

TABLE III: RANK ORDER OF MEAN RESPONSES BY ADMINISTRATORS AND FACULTY AT A PUBLIC AND A PRIVATE UNIVERSITY ON PERCEPTIONS OF ACTUAL AND OPTIMAL DEGREE OF CONTROL OF CURRICULUM DECISIONS FELT EXERTED BY VARIOUS CURRICULUM ACTORS

ACTORS (CURRICULUM DECISION-MAKERS)	VARIABLES	ADMINISTRATORS				FACULTY			
		PRIVATE INSTIT.		PUBLIC INSTIT.		PRIVATE INSTIT.		PUBLIC INSTIT.	
ADMINISTRATORS	CONTROL OVER CURRICULUM DECISIONS	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
FACULTY		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
BOARDS OF CONTROL		4	4	4	4	4	4=	3	3
STUDENTS		3	3	6	5	3	3	6	4
ALUMNI		7	8	7	7	6	6	7	7
TAXPAYERS-CONTRIBUTORS		9	9	8	8	7=	7	8	8
GENERAL PUBLIC		6	6	9	9	7=	8	9	9
COORDINATING BOARDS		8	7	3	3	7=	9	5	6
ACCREDITING GROUPS		5	5	5	6	5	4=	4	5

boards) should exert as much control over curriculum decisions as they do.

5. The private institution administrators indicated no significant differences regarding the degree of control exerted by any of the curriculum actors. This suggests that these administrators were basically in agreement with the degree of control each actor actually exerted on curriculum decisions and prefer it to be that way.

Limitations

Several limitations characterized the study, including the following:

1. It involved only two higher education institutions and then,

they were from the same state. It's therefore possible that different responses may have been obtained from similar subjects at other type of universities (e.g., Catholic versus Methodist, etc.)

2. It was not concerned with different perspectives from such constituencies as department chairs, deans, directors and so on. Nor did it examine or control for differences of opinions by the subjects within, between, or across specific academic departments.

3. Others besides the ones included in the study may have been involved in curriculum decisions.

4. A larger and broader sample as well as a stronger and more powerful statistical analysis could give way to different results. However, this is an attitudinal study and it is significant because it has measured the perceptions of the two control agents of curriculum decisions in both a public and a private sector of higher education.

Discussion

Through an examination of faculty and administrators at a public and a private American university, attempts were made to determine their perceptions or attitudes as to who they perceived had the greatest influence on curriculum decisions from within and between the institutions studied. Despite several methodological and procedural limitations, the results of the study were insightful and constitute a stepping stone for additional research efforts in this area.

The findings seem to corroborate previous work on academic governance at similar institutions (e.g., Lorion, 1972; O'Toole, 1975; Igbineweka, 1982), which indicated that there are differences in attitudes and approaches toward curriculum decisions by faculty and administrators at public and private higher education institutions. However, these studies were basically concerned with

curriculum governance in general. Additionally, much of the previous work on curriculum governance has not been adequately substantiated. This study provided one with more recent information on which to act in regards to curriculum decisions.

Since it clearly indicated that, at both institutions understudied, the faculty are seen as having the greatest influence or control over curriculum decisions, and they themselves, indicate that they want to retain this control, the results would imply that, to bring about the desired curriculum changes in higher education, one should work closely with the faculty, and seriously consider the composition of such bodies as curriculum committees for influences of matters as members' gender and racial/ethnic background. Obviously, there may be restrictions which limit ones ability to dictate or outline to faculty matters of the curriculum. Furthermore, it is not surprising that faculty has the greatest influence on curriculum because they teach what is in the curriculum to the consumers of knowledge (i.e., students). However, if one wants to achieve a curriculum that reflects substantial differences, one underlying implication of the study is that it makes more sense to work more closely with faculty and provide them with any training, knowledge or skills deemed necessary to effect desired changes than just leaving curriculum matters almost entirely up to faculty.

Secondly, the fact that the public institution faculty seemed to believe more than the private institution faculty that various actors should not exert as much control over curriculum decisions

as they do is an expected phenomena. That is to say, people are more concerned about what is going on in the public sector because it is funded basically by tax-payers monies. Yet, while this involvement by others may be the "what is" in curriculum matters, the findings would suggest that this involvement may be more problematic for public institution faculty. This apparent incongruence between "what is" and "what is perceived" or the "actual" and "optimal" practices by the faculty from these different types of institutions may very well be an indication of where more works is needed to facilitate curriculum decisions. It may just be that the public institution faculty perceived the involvement by others as essentially being the hinderance to achieving desired curriculum changes.

One could also conclude from the difference in belief revealed by the public institution faculty versus the private institution faculty studied that the private institution does, indeed, have fewer restrictions on curriculum decisions than the public institution. This situation could either hinder "what is" taught, or move the curriculum development process along so that decisions are made more timely. If the latter is so, the private institution may serve as a model for the public institution to use. Then the results of the study would indicate that one needs to focus more on closing the apparent "what is" and "what is perceived" gap and on the questions of what decisions are made, who makes them, and the knowledge they already possess and need to have to make adequate curriculum decisions, and not as much on how the decisions are

made. As Stage and Manning indicated, "the process of attempting to modify the ways in which one makes decisions and sets policy may be difficult because one tends to recognize only those experiences that reinforces one's theory of action" (pp. 13-14). Nevertheless, this study implies that one should consciously solicit feedback from faculty and all concerned so that more appropriate curriculum decisions are had. Thus, even though the public tended to be ranked last in most matters of curriculum decisions by the respondents, the findings imply that involving the public along with all major actors directly or indirectly in the curriculum decision process would probably be wise and for the betterment of students and society in general.

Apart from helping to clarify the vital area of curricular design of academic governance, the results thus provide significant information for a number of actors (legislators, taxpayers, coordinating boards, accrediting groups, faculty as individuals and as committees or groups, administrators, boards of control [regents, trustees], and students) to consider. Inasmuch as the overall findings may provide additional insight into key factors of curriculum decision-making in higher education, may have implications for curriculum development in general, and may need further development and refinement, the results also seem to have implications for African Americans' achievement. To this area we now turn.

Implications for African American Achievement

One of the questions that occurred as we discussed the

findings was what implications, if any, do they have for African Americans achievements? In a more specific sense, we thought that "curricula are tools of education" (Nobles, 1995, p. 5) that are designed to "(1) systematically guide the transmission of information and knowledge, (2) reinforce the desire to learn/know and (3) encourage the internalization of behavior and/or attitudes consistent with the knowledge learned" (Ibid., pp. 9-10). While Gaff explained that "curriculum affects all undergraduates" (p. 31), we also thought that curriculum is "a human and cultural phenomenon" (Ibid., p. 6). Consequently, the teaching of culture and diversity is important because it helps to build students' self-concept. Therefore, curriculum at all levels "should reinforce culture"(Ibid., p. 12). In this light, one can more clearly see the implications the findings may have for African American achievement.

On the one hand, evidence exists which show that there is "a relationship between culture and Black students' achievement" (Ibid.). On the other hand, until very recently, very little was depicted about the "true" history and culture of Africans, African Americans, or other students of color in any school curriculum. Moreover, those persons as African Americans who have a rich and unique history and who essentially bring to campuses different cultural patterns, learning styles, ways of knowing, ways of thinking, and ways of operating (Okafor, 1996) generally require approaches to learning that may be very different from what faculty and administrators may be used to. Yet, the results of the study

indicated that faculty first and administrators second, are still seen as having the greatest influence on curriculum decisions in higher education. One must therefore ask, how often are faculty, (and for that matter, administrators), trained in the culture and history of African Americans? Essentially, until very recently, and then, not to a substantial level, the answer is basically, not very often (Princes & Igbineweka, 1996). Then, the ultimate question is: if faculty and administrators are not trained and educated substantially about the culture of African Americans, but remain basically content driven, how can one expect major curriculum decisions or changes to occur that will positively make an observable and tangible difference in the progress of African Americans economically, psychologically, or educationally?

To cite Nobles again, "curriculum specialists and developers alike have attempted to address the issue of culture by either adding items of 'cultural interest' to the curriculum, or by attempting to develop cultural-free lessons plans. [In either case], the importance of culture [particular for African Americans] is not adequately served" (p. 5). In other words, as identified in many college curriculum, omitted substantially is information that transcends the periphery to help students become intrinsically motivated to excel. Among others, this information includes:

> That vast structure of behaviors, ideas, attitudes, values, habits, beliefs, customs, language, rituals, ceremonies and practices peculiar to a particular group of people which provides them with a general design for living and patterns

for interpreting reality. (Ibid.).

This presentation was designed as an information source to induce further thought about a possible hinderance to the progress of African Americans. Although additional research may be needed in this area to make a more affirmative statement about the possible effects curriculum decisions may have on African American achievement, the results of the study clearly indicated that one hundred years since the famous separate but unequal case of Plessy vs Ferguson, very little has changed in a major area of curriculum development (curriculum-decisions or who controls curriculum decision-making).

In looking specifically at the study and its findings for the implications they may have for African American achievements, the following appears warranted:

1. Of the nine curriculum decision actors identified and studied at both the public and the private sector of higher education, the faculty were still perceived as exerting and should be exerting the greatest control over curriculum decisions. Yet, at both institutions undertaken, African American/African faculty were almost non-existence. This being the case, they can not make significant differences in terms of curriculum decisions or as role actors. Thus, the curriculum cannot be be expected to significantly to impact positively the achievement of African American achievement.

2. Even though faculty were virtually viewed as having complete control over curriculum decisions in both institutions studied, the study would imply that they (including the few African Americans) do not appear to have all it takes to make curriculum decisions. For one thing, research indicates they still remain content driven and not necessarily trained technically in the area of African American culture. Another thing, curriculum decisions are so technical that it requires experts to handle and control them.

3. In examining the course listing offered at the institutions, there were really no separate African American courses, let alone African courses that were designed to reflect the

interest and history and/or culture of African Americans. Thus, from both institutions understudied, it appears that the best interests of the few African American students could not be served well. If the faculty were the primary curriculum decision makers, it is obvious that additional work needs to be done to encourage them to add such courses.

4. There were no separate departments of African American/African Studies in the two institutions studied either. It is no gainsay then to say the obvious: that what has been said above about the faculty applies to the rest of the curriculum decision makers.

5. If African American faculty are not employed by higher education institutions generally on a substantial level, can any significant changes in the curriculum be made that will help to enhance the overall achievement or development of African Americans specifically, or for all students of color generally?

Conclusion

Although the study of administrator and faculty views of curriculum decisions in the public and the private university needs further refinement, it is encouraging and insightful. It provides more recent information on an important area of higher education curriculum governance that warrants additional research, provides a specific course on where action may be taken to promote curriculum changes, and provokes thought and questions about another possible, and perhaps a more realistic hinderance to the achievement of groups as African Americans.

That is to say, this more recent study revealed that faculty were still seen as the primary actor of curriculum decisions. Furthermore, from the most available literature, an infused curriculum which reflects the culture, heritage, and learning styles of African Americans has been shown to have a positive impact upon their learning. Therefore, if one is seriously

concerned about seeing significant progress in African American development and achievement, an underlying implication of the study is that training and employing faculty who can "systematically guide the transmission of information and knowledge while simultaneously reinforcing in African American students the desire to learn and encouraging the adoption of behaviors and attitudes that are consistent with the historical excellence of African people" (Nobles, p. 10) may be key to achieving an infused curriculum that reflects such information as African and African American content.

Moreover, considerable attention has been given to individual students in attempts to gain knowledge to promote their successful academic, collegiate, and overall human performance. Doesn't it therefore make sense to focus on providing adequate training to those most responsible for making curriculum decisions? After all, isn't curriculum decisions known to have a major affect on the overall performance of all students in higher education?

It is recommended that more specific work be conducted to establish whether there is in fact some scientific connection between faculty and administrator training in African/African American culture, their curriculum decisions, and African American achievements, particularly in higher education. In this paper, the findings of the aforedescribed study were merely considered for implications on African American achievement, and this was due primarily to the concerns that generally prevail regarding African American overall socio-economic and educational status in general.

Appendix A

Questionnaire on Administrator and Faculty Views of Curriculum Decisions

Questionnaire on Faculty and
Administrators Views of Curriculum Decisions

This survey is designed to assess your perceptions of who controls curriculum decisions in higher education. Please check the appropriate space below which best describes your position with your institution.

I. Sex: __ Male __ Female

II. College or School Department (check one)

__ Arts and Sciences
__ Business Administration
__ Education
__ Home Economics
__ Music
__ Community Services
__ Library and Information Sciences
__ Other (please state): _____

III. Present Status (check one)

__ Administrator
Percent of time on academic tasks:
__ less than 50% __ 50% or more
__ Faculty
__ Other (please state): _____

IV. With specific reference to your university, please use the 5-point scale listed below to indicate your perception of (a) how much control or opinion each of the person(s) shown to presently have and (b) should have in determining curriculum governing policies. The 5-point rating scale is as follows:

5 = Complete Control 4 = Primary Control
3 = Some Control 2 = Almost No Control
1 = No Control

A. In decisions on curriculum, my perception of each of the following on selecting the content of courses is as follows:

		Presently Have	Should Have
1.	Administrators	_____	_____
2.	Faculty (as individuals and/or committee members)	_____	_____
3.	Boards of Control/Regents	_____	_____
4.	Students	_____	_____
5.	Alumni	_____	_____
6.	Taxpayers-Contributors	_____	_____
7.	General Public	_____	_____
8.	Coordinating Boards	_____	_____
9.	Accrediting Groups	_____	_____

IV. (Continued from previous page). Use the 5-point rating scale for each of the following: 5=Complete control; 4=Primary control; 3=Some control; 2=Almost no control; 1=No control.

B. On Specifying Instructional Objectives:

	Presently Have	Should Have
1. Administrators	_____	_____
2. Faculty (as individuals and/or committees)	_____	_____
3. Boards of Control/Regents	_____	_____
4. Students	_____	_____
5. Alumni	_____	_____
6. Taxpayers-Contributors	_____	_____
7. General Public	_____	_____
8. Coordinating Boards	_____	_____
9. Accrediting Groups	_____	_____

C. On Evaluating Instruction:

1. Administrators	_____	_____
2. Faculty (as individuals and/or committees)	_____	_____
3. Boards of Control/Regents	_____	_____
4. Students	_____	_____
5. Alumni	_____	_____
6. Taxpayers-Contributors	_____	_____
7. General Public	_____	_____
8. Coordinating Boards	_____	_____
9. Accrediting Groups	_____	_____

D. On Other Aspects of Curriculum Decisions Not Stated Above:

1. Administrators	_____	_____
2. Faculty (as individuals and/or committees)	_____	_____
3. Boards of Control/Regents	_____	_____
4. Students	_____	_____
5. Alumni	_____	_____
6. Taxpayers-Contributors	_____	_____
7. General Public	_____	_____
8. Coordinating Boards	_____	_____
9. Accrediting Groups	_____	_____

Please return questionnaire to Dr. Andrew O. Igbineweka, Department of Political Science, University of North Texas, Denton, Texas.

Thank you for your cooperation!

Appendix B

TABLE IV: COMPARISONS OF OPINIONS OF ADMINISTRATORS AND FACULTY AT A PRIVATE AND A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY ON ACTUAL DEGREE OF CONTROL THEY FELT EXERTED BY VARIOUS ACTORS ON CURRICULUM DECISIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

ACTORS / RESPONDENTS		A. PRIVATE INSTITUTION					B. PUBLIC INSTITUTION				
		N	M	SD	t	P	N	M	SD	t	P
ADMNR.	A	14	2.571	0.646	2.33	*** 0.025	25	3.000	0.645	-0.55	.58
	F	51	2.961	0.528			82	3.098	0.811		
FAC.	A	15	4.067	0.458	0.24	0.813	25	3.840	0.473	0.80	.427
	F	50	4.020	0.714			82	3.720	0.708		
BD. OF CONT.	A	13	1.846	0.801	1.66	0.102	25	2.080	1.038	-1.17	.246
	F	45	1.511	0.589			81	2.333	0.922		
STUD.	A	15	2.133	0.834	0.56	0.574	25	1.560	0.712	-1.22	.226
	F	49	2.000	0.791			81	1.741	0.628		
ALUMNI	A	15	1.267	0.704	0.31	0.757	25	1.240	0.523	0.99	.325
	F	46	1.217	0.467			81	1.136	0.440		
TAXPAY CONTRI	A	13	1.077	0.277	1.9	0.059	25	1.160	0.473	0.43	.666
	F	46	1.000	0.000			81	1.124	0.331		
GEN. PUBLIC	A	14	1.286	0.611	3.27	*** 0.002	25	1.120	0.440	0.64	.523
	F	47	1.000	0.000			81	1.074	0.262		
COORD. BD.	A	13	1.154	0.376	2.81	*** 0.007	25	2.680	1.435	2.81	*** .006
	F	45	1.000	0.000			81	1.926	1.081		
ACCRE. GROUPS	A	14	1.500	0.885	0.21	0.835	24	2.042	1.042	0.44	.664
	F	47	1.447	0.829			81	1.938	1.017		

Note: ***Significant at 0.05 level. See Table IVA for codes.

IVA: KEY TO CODES IN CHARTS

Five-Point Likert Scale	ABBREVIATIONS
5 = Complete control 4 = Primary control 3 = Some control 2 = Almost no control 1 = No control	A/ADMNR = Administrators F/FAC. = Faculty BD. of CONT. = Boards of Control STUD. = Students TAXPAY-CONTRI = Taypayer-Contributors GEN. PUBLIC = General Public COORD. BD. = Coordinating Boards ACCRE. GRP. = Accrediting Groups P = Private Institution S = Public (State) Institution

TABLE V: COMPARISONS OF OPINIONS OF ADMINISTRATORS AND FACULTY AT A PRIVATE AND A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY ON OPTIMAL DEGREE OF CONTROL THEY FELT EXERTED BY VARIOUS ACTORS ON CURRICULUM DECISIONS

ACTORS / RESPONDENTS		A. PRIVATE INSTITUTION					B. PUBLIC INSTITUTION				
		N	M	SD	t	P	N	M	SD	t	P
ADMNR.	A	14	2.571	0.611	-0.42	0.679	24	2.917	0.584	1.59	0.115
	F	50	2.800	0.070			83	2.651	0.756		
FAC.	A	14	4.214	0.426	-1.49	0.141	25	3.880	0.600	2.16	*** .033
	F	49	4.449	0.542			83	4.169	0.581		
BD. OF CONT.	A	13	1.769	0.832	0.51	0.137	24	1.958	0.955	-0.86	0.390
	F	45	1.489	0.506			81	2.124	0.781		
STUD.	A	13	2.286	0.825	0.83	0.409	24	1.708	0.806	2.12	*** 0.036
	F	48	2.083	0.794			81	2.074	0.721		
ALUMNI	A	13	1.143	0.535	-0.37	0.716	24	1.375	0.647	-0.36	0.718
	F	46	1.196	0.453			81	1.432	0.688		
TAXPAY CONTRI	A	13	1.077	0.277	0.37	0.716	24	1.292	0.624	0.06	0.956
	F	46	1.044	0.295			81	1.294	0.597		
GEN. PUBLIC	A	14	1.286	0.611	2.36	*** 0.022	24	1.125	0.448	-0.46	0.643
	F	47	1.043	0.204			81	1.117	0.441		
COORD. BD.	A	13	1.154	0.376	2.81	*** 0.007	25	1.960	1.098	1.41	0.162
	F	45	1.000	0.000			82	1.671	0.832		
ACCRE. GRPS.	A	14	1.500	0.855	0.04	0.098	24	1.667	1.090	-1.17	0.247
	F	47	1.489	0.856			82	1.951	1.041		

Note: *** Significant at 0.05 level. See Table IVA for codes.

TABLE VI: COMPARISON OF OPINIONS OF ADMINISTRATORS AND FACULTY AT A PRIVATE AND A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY TOWARD ACTUAL DEGREE OF CONTROL THEY FELT EXERTED BY VARIOUS ACTORS ON CURRICULUM DECISIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

ACTORS	TYPE OF INSTIT	A. TOTAL ADMINISTRATORS					B. TOTAL FACULTY				
		N	M	SD	t	P	N	M	SD	t	P
ADMNR.	P	14	2.571	0.64	1.99	0.054	51	2.961	0.528	1.07	0.286
	S	25	3.000	0.64			82	2.098	0.811		
FAC.	P	15	4.067	0.458	-1.49	0.146	50	4.020	0.714	-2.36	*** 0.020
	S	25	3.840	0.473			82	3.720	0.708		
BD. OF CONT.	P	13	1.846	0.801	0.71	0.483	45	1.511	0.589	5.40	*** 0.000
	S	25	2.080	1.038			81	2.333	0.922		
STUD.	P	15	2.133	0.834	-2.31	*** 0.026	49	2.000	0.791	-2.07	*** 0.041
	S	25	1.560	0.712			81	1.741	0.628		
ALUMNI	P	15	1.267	0.704	-0.14	0.892	46	1.217	0.467	-0.98	0.328
	S	25	1.240	0.523			81	1.136	0.440		
TAXPAY-CONTRI.	P	13	1.077	0.277	0.58	0.564	46	1.000	0.000	2.53	*** 0.013
	S	25	1.160	0.473			81	1.124	0.331		
GEN. PUBLIC	P	14	1.286	0.611	-0.98	0.334	47	1.000	0.000	1.92	0.057
	S	25	1.120	0.440			81	1.074	0.264		
COORD. BD.	P	13	1.154	0.376	3.74	*** 0.001	45	1.000	0.000	5.73	*** 0.000
	S	25	2.680	1.435			81	1.926	1.081		
ACCRE. GRPS.	P	14	1.500	0.855	1.65	0.108	47	1.447	0.829	2.81	*** 0.008
	S	24	2.042	1.042			81	1.938	1.017		

NOTES: ***Significant at 0.05 level. See Table IVA, pg. 17 for codes.

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TABLE VII: COMPARISON OF OPINIONS OF ADMINISTRATORS AND FACULTY AT A PRIVATE AND A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY ON OPTIMAL DEGREE OF CONTROL THEY FELT EXERTED BY VARIOUS ACTORS ON CURRICULUM DECISIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

ACTORS	TYPE OF INSTIT.	A . TOTAL ADMINISTRATORS					B. TOTAL FACULTY				
		N	M	SD	t	P	N	M	SD	t	P
ADMNR.	P	14	2.714	0.611	1.01	0.318	50	2.800	0.700	1.13	0.25
	S	24	2.917	0.584			83	2.651	0.756		
FAC.	P	14	4.214	0.426	-1.84	0.074	49	4.449	0.542	2.75	*** 0.00
	S	25	3.880	0.600			83	4.169	0.581		
BD. OF CONT.	P	13	1.769	0.832	0.60	0.552	45	1.489	0.506	4.91	*** 0.00
	S	24	1.958	0.955			81	2.124	0.506		
STUD.	P	14	2.286	0.825	-2.11	*** 0.042	49	2.083	0.794	0.07	0.94
	S	24	1.708	0.800			81	2.074	0.721		
ALUMNI	P	14	1.143	0.535	1.13	0.264	46	1.196	0.453	*** 2.09	0.03
	S	24	1.375	0.647			81	1.432	0.688		
TAXPAY CONTRI.	P	13	1.077	0.277	1.17	0.248	46	1.044	0.295	2.56	*** 0.01
	S	24	1.292	0.624			81	1.284	0.597		
GEN. PUBLIC	P	14	1.286	0.611	-0.93	0.358	47	1.043	0.204	1.91	0.05
	S	24	1.125	0.448			81	1.173	0.441		
COORD. BD.	P	13	1.154	0.376	2.55	*** 0.015	45	1.000	0.000	5.40	*** 0.00
	S	25	1.960	1.098			82	1.671	0.832		
ACCRED. GRPS.	P	14	1.500	0.800	0.49	0.627	47	1.480	0.832	2.58	*** 0.01
	S	24	1.667	1.090			82	1.951	1.041		

NOTES: ***Significant at the 0.05 level. See Table IVA for code key.

TABLE VIII: COMPARISON OF OPINIONS OF ADMINISTRATORS AT A PUBLIC AND A PRIVATE UNIVERSITY ON ACTUAL AND OPTIMAL DEGREE OF CONTROL THEY FELT EXERTED BY VARIOUS ACTORS CURRICULUM DECISIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

ACTORS	DEGREE OF CONTROL	A. PRIVATE ADMINISTRATORS					B. PUBLIC ADMINISTRATORS				
		N	M	SD	t	P	N	M	SD	t	P
ADMNR.	ACTUAL	14	2.571	0.646	-1.47	0.165	24	2.958	0.624	0.33	0.747
	OPTIMAL		2.714	0.611				2.917	0.584		
FAC.	ACTUAL	14	4.143	0.363	-1.00	0.336	25	3.840	0.473	-0.33	0.746
	OPTIMAL		4.214	0.426				3.880	0.600		
BD. OF CONT.	ACTUAL	13	1.846	0.801	1.00	0.337	24	2.125	1.035	1.45	0.162
	OPTIMAL		1.769	0.832				1.958	0.955		
STUD.	ACTUAL	14	2.071	0.829	-1.88	0.082	24	1.583	0.717	-0.91	0.377
	OPTIMAL		2.286	0.825				1.708	0.806		
ALUMNI	ACTUAL	14	1.143	0.535	0.00	1.000	24	1.250	0.532	-1.81	0.083
	OPTIMAL		1.143	0.535				1.375	0.647		
TAXPAY-CONTRI.	ACTUAL	13	1.077	0.377	0.00	1.000	24	1.167	0.482	-1.37	0.185
	OPTIMAL		1.077	0.377				1.292	0.624		
GEN. PUBLIC	ACTUAL	14	1.286	0.611	0.00	1.000	24	1.125	0.448	0.00	1.000
	OPTIMAL		1.286	0.611				1.125	0.448		
COORD. BD.	ACTUAL	13	1.154	0.376	0.00	1.000	25	2.680	1.435	3.17	*** 0.004
	OPTIMAL		1.154	0.376				1.960	1.098		
ACCRE. GRP.	ACTUAL	14	1.500	0.855	0.00	1.000	24	2.042	1.042	2.23	*** 0.036
	OPTIMAL		1.500	0.855				1.667	1.090		

NOTES: ***Significant at 0.05 level. See Table IVA for key code.

TABLE IX: COMPARISON OF OPINIONS OF FACULTY AT A PUBLIC AND A PRIVATE UNIVERSITY ON ACTUAL AND OPTIMAL DEGREE OF CONTROL THEY FELT EXERTED BY VARIOUS ACTORS ON CURRICULUM DECISIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

ACTORS	DEGREE OF CONTROL	A. PRIVATE FACULTY					B. PUBLIC FACULTY				
		N	M	SD	t	P	N	M	SD	t	P
ADMNR	ACTUAL	50	2.960	0.533	1.66	0.103	82	3.098	0.811	6.13	*** 0.000
	OPTIMAL		2.800	0.700				2.671	0.738		
FAC.	ACTUAL	49	4.020	0.721	-3.56	*** 0.001	82	3.720	0.708	-4.61	*** 0.000
	OPTIMAL		4.449	0.542				4.159	0.577		
BD.OF CONT.	ACTUAL	45	1.511	0.589	0.57	0.570	80	2.350	0.915	3.02	*** 0.003
	OPTIMAL		1.489	0.506				2.138	0.775		
STUD.	ACTUAL	48	1.979	0.785	-1.00	0.322	80	1.750	0.626	-3.96	*** 0.000
	OPTIMAL		2.083	0.794				2.088	0 715		
ALUMNI.	ACTUAL	46	1.217	0.467	0.33	0.743	80	1.138	0.443	-3.30	*** 0.000
	OPTIMAL		1.196	0.453				1.438	0.691		
TAYPAY-CONTR.	ACTUAL	46	1.000	0.000	-1.00	0.323	80	1.125	0.333	-2.20	0.088
	OPTIMAL		1.044	0.295				2.288	0.599		
GEN. PUB.	ACTUAL	47	1.000	0.000	-1.43	0.160	80	1.075	0.265	-2.62	*** 0.011
	OPTIMAL		1.043	0.204				1.175	0.444		
COORD. BD.	ACTUAL	45	1.000	0.000	0.00	1.000	81	1.926	1.081	3.36	*** 0.001
	OPTIMAL		1.000	0.000				1.679	0.834		
ACCRE. GRPS.	ACTUAL	47	1.447	0.829	-0.57	0.569	81	1.938	1.017	-0.50	0.620
	OPTIMAL		1.489	0.856				1.963	1.042		

NOTES: ***Significant at 0.05 level. See Table IVA for key code.

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